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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
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HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL
Bush Statement Angers Armenian Diaspora -Hurriyet
French Legislature to Punish Denial of Armenian 'Genocide' -
Milliyet
Rice Urges Shiites, Kurds to Agree on New Iraq Government -
Aksam
Turkey-EU Partnership Council Meets Today - Hurriyet
Pope Issues Warm Message to Muslims - Hurriyet
Blair Seeks Clinton's Help for May 5 Election - Sabah
Prince Charles Prays for Fallen in Gallipoli - Aksam
Woman Candidate to Run for Iran Presidency - Sabah

OPINION MAKERS
Bush Message Seeks To Balance Between Turks, Armenians -
Radikal
Bush Supports Turkey's Proposal on Armenian Claims - Zaman
US Pushes Shiites, Kurds to Form Government 'At Once' - Yeni
Safak
Private Guards Violate Human Rights in Iraq - Zaman
Day to Bid Farewell to Syria in Lebanon - Zaman
Prodi: EU Will Collapse If France Rejects EU Constitution -
Cumhuriyet
New Pope Issues Friendship Message To Muslims - Zaman
Putin Longs for Days Of Soviet Union - Cumhuriyet
US Aims to 'Quarantine' North Korea - Cumhuriyet
Weizman, Architect of Middle East Peace Process, Dies -
Radikal

BRIEFING

Turkey Grants US Increased Access to Incirlik Airbase: The
Turkish Government on Monday approved a long-standing US
request for increased access to Incirlik Airbase for
logistical support into Iraq and Afghanistan, papers report.
Turkey also accepted a US request for 'blanket clearance'
for all cargo flights, backing away from an earlier position
that each flight would require separate permission. US
Ambassador Eric Edelman and Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul are
to outline the details of the deal at a joint news
conference on Tuesday, according to reports. Foreign
Minister Abdullah Gul said yesterday that the Turkish
cabinet had extended the duration of the use of Incirlik in
accordance with NATO and UN requirements. The one-year
mandate of the new agreement will begin on June 23. The
Turkish cabinet decree has been sent to President Sezer for
approval. Some reports suggest that the US Embassy will be
informed of Turkey's positive decision on the cargo hub
request once the decree has been signed by President Sezer.

Bush 'Remembers' Armenians, Does Not Mention 'Genocide' in
April 24 Message: Turkish papers give extensive coverage to
a message released by President Bush on April 24 to remember
the 'forced exile and mass killings of as many as 1.5
million Armenians' during the last days of the Ottoman
empire. 'I join my fellow Americans and Armenians around
the world in expressing my deepest condolences for this
horrible loss of life,' Bush said. Papers note that
President Bush backed Prime Minister Erdogan's proposal to
set up a joint commission of historians to examine Armenian
genocide allegations. Most reports suggest that the Turkish
Foreign Ministry viewed the President's statement as
positive, especially given the pressure exerted by Armenian
groups and the problems in US-Turkish relations. Some media
speculate that Ankara gave the final green light to the US
request for a cargo hub at Incirlik only after ensuring that
the Bush statement did not include the word 'genocide.'

Cicek Signals Shift in Turkey's Armenia Policy: Turkish
Minister of Justice and government spokesman Cemil Cicek
said after a cabinet meeting on Monday that after many years
of leaving the issue of 'genocide' to historians, it is now

high time for Turkey to move to disprove the allegations. 'We hope that, instead of turning incidents of the past into a cause of hatred and anger, events should be brought into the light by historians with an eye toward future reconciliation,' Cicek said, adding that Turkey must follow a new policy in an effort to 'disprove' the 'lies' of those who claim that a genocide has taken place. Cicek noted that Turkey has opened its archives, and proposed forming joint commissions of historians to investigate the Armenian claims. Papers assess Cicek remarks as a change in Turkey's Armenia policy, and expect Ankara to seek the support of NGOs, academics, and professional organizations to that end.

Chief Judge Warns Against Attempts to Legalize Headscarves: Constitutional Court President Mustafa Bumin warned on Monday against possible political efforts to allow headscarves to be worn at Turkish universities and in public areas. Bumin said that 'even if changes are made to the Constitution, as long as there is secularism there can be no headscarves in universities or public areas.' He noted that it is 'a kind of exploitation' for political parties to advocate liberalization on the headscarf issue, adding that parties that have taken such a position in the past have been shut down. Parliamentary Speaker Bulent Arinc and the AK Party leadership criticized Bumin's remarks as a violation of fundamental rights, while the parliamentary opposition backed his comments. 'We should not ignore fundamental rights which are meant for all of us,' PM Erdogan said in response to Bumin. Arinc said that 'nothing can be achieved through bans,' adding that Bumin represents a 'restrictive mentality' in Turkish politics. Bumin said later on Monday that his remarks should be seen as a warning. 'Certain circles pressured me to speak out on the issue,' Bumin said. 'I had to make reference to the issue of headscarves, which is gradually on the rise in Turkey,' Bumin stressed.

Israeli, Palestinian Businessmen to Meet in Ankara: Ankara is to host a meeting of Israeli and Palestinian businessmen on Wednesday in advance of PM Erdogan's May 1-2 visit to Israel, "Hurriyet" reports. Turkey's Union of Chambers (TOBB) will host the meeting, which will discuss business cooperation between Israel and Palestine, and ways to enhance cooperation with Turkey.

Turkey's Jewish Leaders to Accompany Erdogan on Israel Visit: Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan has invited Turkish-Jewish Society leaders Bension Pinto and Silvio Ovadya to accompany him during his state visit to Israel on May 1-2, "Hurriyet" reports.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Pope Benedict XVI; Turkey-Armenia

"Fear in Christian Europe"
Haluk Ulman wrote in the economic-political "Dunya" (4/26): "Europe, with its Christian identity, has the fear that it could lose its religious identity to a certain extent by mixing with the Islamic world. The influx of immigrants from all over the Muslim world -- from Morocco, Algeria, Turkey, and Afghanistan -- is the main reason for this fear. Europeans are afraid of seeing an Islamic-dominated religious culture in Europe. Staunch supporters of this point of view include Christian Democrats and other right wing parties. These parties are strengthened by their connection with the Vatican. We can only understand the Vatican's choice of an ultraconservative pope and the ongoing xenophobia in Europe as a further sign of Christianity's fear of Islam."
"The Pope and the Turks"

Yilmaz Oztuna wrote in the conservative "Turkiye" (4/26): "Before being elected as the new pope, Ratzinger used to work against Turkey's getting a negotiation date from the EU. This is acceptable to a certain point, because even within Turkey there are anti-EU groups. Yet the most annoying part of Ratzinger's approach for Turkey is his suggestion that Turkey should direct its efforts toward being a member of the Arab League. This shows that the new pope is not only unaware of Turkey-EU relations, but is also ignorant about Turkey's ultimate destination. . Pope Benedict XVI was very negatively influenced by the radical events of 1968, which he considered as the main reason for the rise of anti-religious feeling and homosexuality. But he makes a big mistake and misreads reality by blaming Muslims, including Turks, for all the things that he opposes. Nevertheless, let us hope that the new pope takes this criticism on board and focuses on world peace."

"Once Again It's Over, But."
Sami Kohen observed in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (4/26): "President Bush put aside his domestic political concerns and did not use the 'genocide' word. This shows how much he valued the importance of Turkish-American relations. Yet we should not be mesmerized by this development. We had better see the reality regarding the general atmosphere in the US, which is supportive of the genocide argument. A

Congressional resolution on this could come at any time. Will the Bush administration be able to stop a resolution? It remains to be seen. But the bottom line is this: We have overcome the April 24 issue this time, but the case remains open. . Turkey should exercise to open a new global approach and produce new strategies on this issue. In this regard, Turkey's offer to Armenia to establish a joint commission is a positive development. Ankara can take more steps toward facilitating bilateral ties with Yerevan. A constructive dialogue can be established between Turkish NGOs and the Armenian diaspora. Only by developing new, rational, and pragmatic strategies we can avoid having to deal with this same issue over and over again."

EDELMAN